GHOSTBUSTERS

WRITER'S BIBLE

Written by:
Len Janson &
Chuck Menville
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DIC ENTERPRISES, INC.

They started on a shoestring. Nobody gave them a ghost of a chance to succeed. Especially since ghosts were their business...or, more accurately, chasing ghosts. It was like trying to trap lightning in a bottle -- nobody had ever done it. Until now. Until the arrival of the one and only...

...GHOSTBUSTERS!

Who are these GHOSTBUSTERS? These four misfits who singlehandedly saved New York City from supernatural destruction? In the eyes of the world they're now frontpage celebrities, heroes who laughed (well, at least sneered) in the face of unspeakable evil and brought it tumbling down (along with half a block of Manhattan Island.) Thanks to the GHOSTBUSTERS, the public can once again go to sleep secure in the knowledge that their city is safe from demons and all is right with the world.

But is it? After all, nothing is forever...and that applies to the spirit world as well as our own. Every day new calls come in to GHOSTBUSTERS H.Q., seeking their help against hauntings, possessions, curses, witchcraft, spooks, spectres, and every other off-the-wall weirdness known (and unknown) to mortal man.

For the GHOSTBUSTERS, business is BOO-ming.

THE CHARACTERS

PETER VENKMAN - The opportunist and ~~natural~~ reluctant leader of the group. He's glib, outgoing, ~~with a dry, sarcastic wit and a~~ boyish charm that comes in handy when he needs to con someone -- be it a lady, a customer, even a ghost. Peter is a class clown with a Ph.D, a wise-guy, a practical joker and a party animal. He is a bit of a womanizer, too -- but we should play this aspect down. He's a guy who sees the humor in every situation, no matter how tense.

Pete Venkman's not all that wild about ghost busting. Truth is, ghosts scare the skin off of him, be it a class-5 full form vapor or a free floating apparition. But when the chips are down (as they so often are), he somehow rises to the occasion and, through a combination of luck, skill, and sheer audacity, pulls his group through the crisis. He is a very unscientific thinker, but incredibly, his crazy, off-the-wall schemes seem to work, to everyone's amazement except his own.

Pete is also somewhat of a slob. His hang-loose manners, casual clothing, flip language and disaster-area sleeping quarters would make Oscar Madison envious.

When the Ghostbusters are out on assignment, Pete likes to play the roll of head-honcho (especially if there are any ladies around), snapping out directions: "Ray, take the left. Egon, take the right. Winston, take the middle. I'll take a break."

Ultimately, Peter Venkman is a simple man with simple tastes: He simply wants to be a filthy rich, national hero.

RAY STANTZ - The idealist, sincere and totally dedicated to his cause as a Ghostbuster. A true ecto-scientist, Ray eagerly looks forward to every new assignment, tackling it with all the zeal of a school kid. He is an avid reader, an expert on paranormal phenomena, and can recite obscure supernatural facts the way a sports nut reels off baseball statistics. ("I remember reading about a class-6 psychic turbulence that converged at Coney Island on October 10, 1957..."). Of all the Ghostbusters, Ray is the one who finds the enterprise most thrilling. For him, catching ghosts is like being a kid in a candy store. Of course, every now and then a particularly mean-spirited spirit will scare the Wheaties right out of him...but he's never slowed down for long.

Though Ray doesn't have the the silver tongue of Pete, the electronic genius of Egon, or the common sense of Winston, he does have tons of enthusiasm. It was Ray who instantly fell in love with the dingy, dirty, deserted firehouse and convinced the others to buy it as their headquarters. And it was Ray who brought home the hopeless wreck of a hearse and converted it into their spiffy Ghostbustinq vehicle. He's the group's "Mr. Fixit", an incurable optimist always able to find good in people, objects, or situations that seem totally without redemption. And sometimes he learns that he should have left well-enough alone.

EGON SPENGLER - The electronics genius who is also a preppy nerd. Very SERIOUS: VERY Ivy League. Prone to ties, sweaters and argyle socks. Seems detached from reality and lives in his own spacey dream-world. (His hobby is collecting spores, molds and fungi.) Very focused on his high-tech ghostbusting inventions, including the ecto-containment system and the spirit-tracking device which blinks and beeps like a Geiger counter. In fact, all of the group's equipment is a result of Egon's genius...and Ray Stantz's mechanical aptitude. Egon fixes nothing; he's strictly theoretical. A New Wave Spock.

Egon's approach to every problem, whether personal or ghostbusting, is strictly scientific. He doesn't really consider ghostbusting worthy of his lofty intellect, but he rather enjoys the notoriety it has brought him, (although he still wishes he could loosen up more around the ladies.) His basic attitude is stiff, formal, not unlike the Higgins character in "Magnum P.I."

WINSTON ZEDDMORE - The pragmatist who was originally hired help, but is now a full partner in the company. Winston is the common sense member of the group, the one who desperately tries to keep the whole whacko enterprise from getting completely out of hand. He frequently gets on Venkman's case about his sloppiness. And he's the guy who gets stuck going over the expense sheets late at night, the only buffer between the Ghostbusters and bankruptcy.

Winston's big weakness is that he's a soft touch, a defender of the downtrodden, the oppressed, the unfaired upon. He's constantly bringing home strays -- animal and human alike. Sometimes even ghosts. It was Winston who freed the greedy but good-hearted little ghoul, Slimer, from the laser containment system and trained him to be his pet.

When arguments ensue (and they always do) between Pete, Ray and Egon as to what super-sophisticated, ultra-scientific approach to use at a critical moment, Winston cuts through all the crap and comes up with a simple, obvious solution that the others wished they'd thought of.

SLIMER - A short, rotund ghoul...bright green, with a cavernous mouth, bald pate, bug-eyes, and no legs. Slimer travels everywhere by zipping through the air...clumsily. He's always colliding with things -- and people -- leaving a splotch of tell-tale, ectoplasmic slime from the impact.

After Winston released him from the containment system, Slimer became Winston's -- and the Ghostbusters' -- unofficial pet. A pesky pet. The netherworld's version of a frisky, overeager puppy. He's constantly getting under foot, raiding the 'fridge (he's a living garbage disposal,) pulling practical jokes, wanting the group to play with him, etc. He can't wait for the guys to get home from an assignment so he can gleefully assault them with big, slobbery licks that leave them all slimed up. They try to fend him off, but he's hard to discourage. Finally, one of the group will yell in frustration, "No, Slimer! DOWN!" Whereupon, the offended Slimer takes the order literally and disappears straight down through the floor with a big splot of slime. Then eerie, mournful whimpering emanates from beneath the floorboards, driving everyone nuts until they finally give in and coax Slimer back into view. Exuberant, he erupts through the floor, and resumes licking and sliming the guys up one side and down the other.

Winston trained Slimer as he would a dog. As a result, Slimer displays certain canine characteristics - though his bark is more like a belch. He can sit up, beg, roll over (all in mid-air), wag his "tail", fetch slippers, the morning paper, etc. But the problem is, all the objects he brings back are always covered with slime.

Slimer is an insatiable chow-hound; a living Cuisinart. He puts away enough groceries to feed the 7th Fleet, then looks around to see if there's anything he's missed. Shameless, he even resorts to trickery by stealing food right off the Ghostbusters' plates.

Slimer communicates with grunts, snorts and hiccups. He's like a mischievous little kid-monster who giggles and laughs a lot, and can pop up anywhere. But just because he's a ghost doesn't mean he's not afraid of certain things -- like bigger, badder ghosts or full-bore demons.

JANINE MELNITZ - The Ghostbusters' secretary, a small, bespectacled young woman whose pleasant features belie her shrill, nasal voice and thick, Brooklyn accent. Janine is a habitual gum-chewer and bubble-blower who tries to be polite and proper to the clients. Oh, how she tries. But her fuse is short -- real short -- and she always winds up losing her cool and letting it all hang out, New York cabbie-style. Janine may be petite, but she's a real tiger when she gets her dander up.

Despite her crusty attitude, she's actually fond of her four, nutty employers. After all, she's been with them from the start. But she doesn't patronize them or live in awe of their newfound fame. No way. To Janine, this is just another 9-to-5 job and, no matter how chaotic things around Ghostbusters Headquarters become, her main priorities are her coffee breaks, lunch hour and overtime.

Janine is especially attracted to the shy egghead, Egon. It's the old story of "opposites attract," but these two are <u>so</u> opposite that there is always some awkward foul-up coming between them.

THE CAR

ECTO 1 - The Ghostbusters' vehicle -- a vintage Cadillac hearse that has been customized and computerized, with an arsenal of laser weaponry mounted on the roof. Ecto-1 is not a character in the true sense of the word, meaning that it doesn't talk, fly, or travel underwater. But it does have character. Due to its age, it's temperamental and full of idiosyncrasies. The horn sticks at the worst times; parts drop off like autumn leaves; it wheezes and pings and groans, even going down hill; and when the job is done, Ecto-1 needs to be kicked, thumped or coddled before its motor will shut off. But, hey, nobody's perfect.

Ray Stantz is the guy who originally bought this rustbucket, to the dismay of his partners, and he's the guy who worked automotive miracles to get it into its present, shiny condition. Ecto-1 is Ray's baby; he understands its quirks better than anybody else, and it is he who almost lovingly does the maintenance and repairs. In return, Ecto-1 displays an eerie loyalty to Ray. When the going gets impossibly tough, it's Ray who usually coaxes that extra effort out of old Ecto-1 and saves the day.

THE SERIES

Obviously, the "GHOSTBUSTERS" movie is our prototype, with its nutty blend of humor and horror, and its four fruitcake leads. These are the vital ingredients that we must build every episode around. However, in adapting the property from live-action to animation, we can't just mimic the movie and expect automatic success. George Lucas is finding this out currently with his Saturday morning "Ewoks/Droids" hour. Adjustments must be made, taking into account the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the animated form, as well as to maximize the show's appeal to the younger audience that typically views after-school syndicated series'. This doesn't mean turning out juvenile scripts that underestimate today's kids. Rather, it suggests that we keep the dialogue scenes brief, hold romantic character involvement to a minimum, and above all never let the energy and momentum lag.

We have a terrific running start on the energy aspect by virtue of Ray Parker's hit song and the rest of the upbeat, Top 4U score. The trick is to capitalize on the music with rock-video visuals: Lots of bizarre, surrealistic ghosts and ghouls not seen before; wild chases through every imaginable setting; constant cliff-hanging predicaments; and loads of sight gags.

The storylines should avoid the usual, tired cliches. The writer's challenge will be to refrain from going over the old scares-and-screams ground already covered by Scooby Doo and elevate the thinking and tone of the scripts to the hipper, more high-tech level of that made the "GHOSTBUSTERS" film so popular. This doesn't mean complicated, convoluted plots. To the contrary, the simpler the plotline, the better...as long as it's fresh and imaginative. After all, the plot is merely the framework that allows our characters to blossom and function in their own, individual ways.

For instance, in the movie, the ghost-alarm sounds and our heroes leap from their beds and slide down the firepole, then dash for their trusty "ghost-mobile", the Ecto-1. In our animated series, we could have the alarm automatically flip their beds up vertically, flinging the guys at the brass pole like human skeets. But Ray Stantz has taken the pole down to repair it, and forgotten to tell anyone, so they all hurtle down the open shaft and through the sunroof of their hearse, landing in their seat <u>backwards</u> as the engine automatically roars to life and the car is catapulted out of the firehouse like a carrier jet being launched.

STORYLINES

1. Zeddman brings home a cute little stray doggie he found on the street, unaware that it's an incarnation of the evil demon Gozar, bent on destroying the Ghostbusters from within, where they are most vulnerable.

2. A traveling exhibit of ancient Egyptian artifacts arrives in the Big Apple and bizarre occurrences begin to plague the city, phenomena seemingly linked to the exhibit...repercussions of some ancient curse.

3. The Ghostbusters are burnt out and decide to take a vacation. They hit the road in Ecto 1, but everywhere they go, they run into supernatural problems. Then they discover they're the cause -- their hearse is haunted!

4. During an electrical storm, a bolt of lightning strikes the TV antenna atop the Ghostbusters' firehouse and surges down into the spectral containment device, creating a momentary dimensional gate that sucks all the Ghostbusters from their beds and into another, parallel dimension where all the spirits dwell. Luckily, they have some of their ghost-fighting gear with them.

5. A rival ghost-busting business opens up in town...a scam operation that pretends to banish bogus "ghosts" for bargain prices. The original Ghostbusters are being squeezed out of business...until their phony competitors accidentally unleash an army of <u>real</u> ghosts!

6. After being called to de-ghost a traveling circus, the Ghostbusters have barely started their investigation when Pete Venkman is suddenly possessed by a notoriously whacky clown. A clown whose penchant for outrageous practical jokes becomes increasingly more bizarre...and more dangerous.

7. Egon'a in love, so head-over-heels that he's absentmindedly screwing up his daily duties as a Ghostbuster. But he keeps his girlfriend's identity a secret until the day he finally stuns his buddies with the announcement that he's getting married...to a ghost!

8. The Big Apple is plagued by mysterious power blackouts and the Ghostbusters are plagued by the EPA'a bureaucratic Walter Peck who tries to shut them down. The Ghostbusters discover that an awesome energy monster is lodged in the city electrical plant, sucking up energy as fast as it can be produced. With each passing hour the glowing monster grows larger and finally unleashes itself on the city, and that's when the Ghostbusters find out one more piece of bad news: The monster is not an overgrown Reddi Kilowatt -- it's their arch nemesis from the spirit world -- GOZAR. (Pilot Script)